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Letter dated 23 August 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, and with regard to the decision of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to suspend the membership of Syria in that organization, I should like to draw your attention to the following:

The decision to suspend the membership of Syria in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation constitutes a violation of that organization's charter. The necessary procedures for taking such a decision were not carried out. Moreover, the Syrian Arab Republic wonders why the Organization of Islamic Cooperation would take such an uncalled-for step, given that its charter calls on its members to respect the right of self-determination and non-interference in domestic affairs and to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each Member State.

The concern of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and its members for the State and people of Syria should be expressed by sincere and constructive efforts to restore security and stability to Syria, and a call for comprehensive national dialogue to reach a political solution under Syrian leadership, guided by the Charter of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, paragraph 27, which provides that the Member States, parties to any dispute, the continuance of which may be detrimental to the interests of the Islamic Ummah or may endanger the maintenance of international peace and security shall, seek a solution by good offices, negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement or other peaceful means of their own choice. In this context good offices may include consultation with the Executive Committee and the Secretary-General. The decision to suspend the membership of Syria is inconsistent with the letter and spirit of that article. It also contradicts the Charter of the United Nations, Chapter 8, which provides for the role of regional organizations in the pacific settlement of local disputes.

The Syrian Arab Republic has not abandoned its belief in the important role of the international and regional organizations of which it is a member, which should consist of constructive, objective and neutral efforts to find a political solution to the ongoing crisis in Syria under Syrian leadership. In that context, we note that no invitation whatsoever was extended to Syria to attend the Islamic Summit in Mecca,

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which constitutes yet another violation of the organization's charter. The organization's decision to suspend Syria's membership amounts to an abdication of its responsibility to play a positive role in resolving the ongoing crisis through peaceful means. On the contrary, that decision has had the effect of closing diplomatic channels, and is therefore a departure from the aims and goals of both the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations.

It is extremely odd that an extraordinary summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation should be held in the name of Islamic solidarity at a time when that organization is spurning a member State that is undergoing a crisis provoked in part by member States of that very same organization, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey. Those States have given refuge to armed terrorist groups, provided support to terrorists of a number of foreign nationalities, and supplied them with weapons and funding to carry out violent terrorist operations in Syria. They have incited opposition groups to reject dialogue and encouraged them to persist with violence. They have also imposed illegal and oppressive economic sanctions on the Syrian people for the purpose of breaking their political will and punishing them for their national choices. It is also reprehensible that in its final statement, the Islamic Summit should affirm the opposition of the Islamic States to extremism and radicalism, and the need to confront distorted thinking and condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, at a time when certain member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation are supporting all manifestations of radicalism, terrorism and extremism in Syria. Those States are sending extremist Salafi, Wahhabi, Takfiri and Jihadist elements to fight in Syria with the goal of sowing chaos and destruction and spreading a spirit of hatred, division, sectarianism and radicalism within Syria. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has exploited its status as the headquarters State of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to promote its distorted view of events in Syria in an effort to divert attention from the grave human rights violations that it is committing against its own people. Its questionable behaviour goes against the noble teachings of Islam, and is in line with previous positions that have disrespected the rights of Arabs and Muslims on more than one occasion.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic
to the United Nations